

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2725

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 12070

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, PFOR, CI
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHILE: NEW DISAPPEARANCES

1. AT LEAST SEVEN FAMILIES HAVE FILED HABEAS CORPUS PETITIONS ON BEHALF OF RELATIVES ALLEGEDLY DETAINED BY GOC SECURITY FORCES ON NOVEMBER 15 AND 20. WE HAVE BEEN APPROACHED BY A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER AND THE NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR WITH RESPECT TO THE BEST KNOWN DISAPPEARANCE, THAT OF DR. FERNANDO ORTIZ LETELIER. ORTIZ, A COMMUNIST, WAS A PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE FOR MAY YEARS. HIS WIFE SAYS SHE IS TRYING TO BUILD UP PRESSURE ON THE GOC NOT TO KILL HIM. THE OTHER SIX PERSONS ARE ALSO THOUGHT TO BE COMMUNISTS.

2. ON ANOTHER FRONT, A VICARIATE OF SOLIDARITY SOURCE TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT FOUR WOMEN HAD APPROACHED THE VICARIATE INDEPENDENTLY DURING THE RECENT PAST WITH SIMILAR STORIES: THEY SAY THEIR HUSBANDS DISAPPEARED FOR ONE OR TWO WEEKS AND RETURNED HOME TERRORIZED. ACCORDING TO THE WOVES, THEIR HUSBANDS OBVIOUSLY HAD BEEN HELD ILLEGALLY BY GOC SECURITY FORCES. THE MEN REFUSE TO GO TO THE VICARIATE OR OTHER RELIEF AGENCIES AND TELL THEIR WIVES THEY MUST LEAVE CHILE IMMEDIATELY.

3. COMMENT: WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THE ACCURACY
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OF THESE ACCOUNTS AND DO NOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY COULD BE PROVOCATIONS -- AS THE GOC HAS BEEN WONT TO ALLEGE IN SIMILAR CASES. ON THE OTHER HAND, GIVEN THE GOC'S RECORD THIS YEAR WITH REGARD TO DETENTION OF COMMUNISTS, WE CAN BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE PICKED UP BY SECURITY FORCES. THE CASES DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 2 ABOVE RECALL THE TECHNIQUE USED WITH THE BUDNIK

BROTHERS (SANTIAGO 8652).

4. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH CURRENT CHILEAN LAW PERMITS SECURITY FORCES TO DETAIN PEOPLE INCOMMUNICADO FOR UP TO TEN DAYS, IT REQUIRES NOTIFICATION OF DETENTION TO BE MADE TO NEXT OF KIN WITHIN 48 HOURS.

5. THE EMBASSY WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO WITHHOLD REPORTING THESE STORIES UNTIL MORE INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FERNANDO ORTIZ, HOWEVER, IS NOW KNOWN OUTSIDE CHILE AND PRESUMABLY WILL SOON BE REPORTED IN THE US MEDIA.
POPPER

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